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PARIS FOR ARS (DWINTON)
DEPARTMENT FOR AF/PD ANYASO, TITUS, LISENBY, AF/W FOR ACOOK

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TAGS: [KIRC](#) [OIIP](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAO](#) [KISL](#) [PINR](#) [ML](#) [BN](#)

SUBJECT: BENIN GPRA REPORT: HIV/AIDS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES
NOVEMBER 3-21, 2008

REF: SECSTATE 100057

¶1. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: Benin's participant in the HIV/AIDS and Infectious Diseases Program, Dr. Rene Keke, Chief of the Department of Sexually Transmitted Diseases at the Ministry of Health, returned to Benin and debriefed the Acting Public Affairs Officer and the Cultural Affairs Assistant about his visit. He was very satisfied with the program and promised to share with his office colleagues, the insights, knowledge and perceptions he gained during the program in the U.S.

¶2. DATE OF ACTIVITY: November 3-21, 2008; first quarter, FY 09.

¶3. PROGRAM JUSTIFICATION/OBJECTIVES: The program was a good opportunity for Rene Keke to get a better understanding of the global impact of infectious diseases and the pandemic of HIV/AIDS on economic growth and development, political stability, social cohesion, and national and regional security and to explore education and prevention programs, research and development, and treatment and care, with particular focus on innovative techniques and strategies at the community and grassroots level.

¶4. MPP UMBRELLA THEMES AND AUDIENCE REACHED: This program meets Post's objectives in Promoting Education, Basic Health, Human Rights and Mutual Understanding.

¶5. ACTIVITIES/IMPACT/RESULTS: During the debriefing session, Rene Keke said he was positively surprised by Americans' friendliness, discipline and hard work. He said that he found Americans to be outspoken, easy-going and generally keen on establishing contact with people. One can easily approach Americans as well as visit American institutions, he said, referring to the visit of the White House. Rene Keke was impressed by the political system. He had the opportunity to witness the strong mobilization of the voting population on Election Day. He noticed that there are no federal ministries in charge of culture, economy and development. He was also struck by the health system which is very liberal and functions on the basis of insurance. He expressed surprise at the fact that about 50 million Americans are without health insurance. Dr. Keke was impressed by the great involvement of the private sector, civil society associations, NGOs and confessional organizations in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

As an immediate result of his participation, Rene Keke organized a lessons-learned workshop with his colleagues and other professionals in charge of the malaria program and shared with them his U.S. experience in the field of HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases. He has already contacted research specialists in the field of malaria whom he met during his trip. His participation in the HIV/AIDS program allowed him to learn more about prevention strategies, and a community based approach to activity programming. He was also inspired by the way women in prison and high risk groups are taken care of and educated about the pandemic, and how in turn they educate their peers.

¶6. Dr. Keke found the program to be well organized and tightly focused. Nonetheless he wished there could have been more time allotted to asking questions related to the participants' field of interest. He also suggested that the participants take more time for individual visits in each city.

¶7. NON-USG SOURCES OF IN-COUNTRY FUNDING/IN KIND SUPPORT: None

¶8. QUALITY OF USG SUPPORT: Excellent. The participant was very impressed by the quality and professionalism of the speakers, ELOs and programs.

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